

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 6394

LIMDIS

LONDON FOR WOESSNER

E O 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM PINT PGOV GE US
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS: COUNTRY ACTION PLAN FOR THE GDR

REF: STATE 150907 (NOTAL)

1. IN AN EFFORT TO MEET THE DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST FOR COMMENTS
BY JUNE 30 ON THE REFERENCE TELEGRAM, THE FOLLOWING ARE
THE EMBASSY'S INITIAL COMMENTS ON A COUNTRY ACTION PLAN
FOR THE GDR. OUR GENERAL IMPRESSION IS THAT THE DRAFT, AS
WRITTEN, REQUIRES CONSIDERABLE REVISION BEFORE WE WOULD
BE HAPPY WITH IT. SOME BUT NOT ALL OF THE ASPECTS OF THE
DRAFT THAT CONCERN US, ARE THE FOLLOWING:

2. WHILE THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT BASIC RIGHTS (FREEDOM OF
SPEECH AND FREEDOM OF EMIGRATION) ARE SEVERALY CIRCUMSCRIBED
IN THE GDR, WE THINK IT IS INACCURATE TO SAY THEY ARE
NON-EXISTENT, PARTICULARLY WHEN EAST GERMANS ARE PERMITTED
AFTER CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO EMIGRATE IN LIMITED NUMBER.
WE ALSO QUESTION WHETHER OPEN CRITICISM OF THE STATE
IS CONSIDERED A CRIMINAL OFFENSE.

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3. WE QUESTION THE FIGURE OF 5,000 EAST GERMANS ALLOWED
TO EMIGRATE ANNUALLY TO WEST GERMANY. IT IS OUR UNDER-
STANDING THAT THE NUMBER IS APPROXIMATELY 10,000
ANNUALLY.

4. IN CONNECTION WITH "RECENT TRENDS IN GOVERNMENTAL
POLICES RELATED TO BASIC HUMAN NEEDS," WE WOULD TAKE

ISSUE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT "THE GDR'S RECORD IN PROVIDING ADEQUATE HOUSING (AND) HEALTH CARE IS QUITE GOOD." THE EAST GERMAN REGIME ITSELF ADMITS THAT THE HOUSING PROBLEM WILL NOT BE SOLVED UNTIL 1990 (AND THAT MIGHT BE OPTIMISTIC), AND THEREFORE WE SEE LITTLE PURPOSE IN SUGGESTING THAT ITS RECORD IN THIS AREA IS "QUITE GOOD". WHILE IT IS HIGHLY SPECULATIVE, OUR INFORMATION SUGGESTS THAT HEALTH CARE FOR GDR CITIZENS, WHILE FREE AND AVAILABLE, LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED. WE THINK IT WOULD SIMPLY BE MORE APPROPRIATE TO STATE THAT THE REGIME IS COMMITTED TO A POLICY OF PROVIDING, BUT NOT YET ACHIEVED, AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING.

5. WITH RESPECT TO THE SECTION ON ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS, WE SEE NO PROBLEM IN FORMULATING A SHORT TERM ACTION PLAN, DEPENDING ON WHAT IT MIGHT INCLUDE. AT THE SAME TIME, WE AGREE WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT THAT ANY EFFORT TO MODIFY THE GDR'S INTERNAL POLICIES WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF US/GDR RELATIONS. WE ALSO AGREE WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSESSMENT THAT THE REGIME WOULD LOOK ON SUCH A PROGRAM AS DIRECT INTERFERENCE IN THEIR INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND WOULD PROBABLY TAKE FURTHER STEPS TO RESTRICT HUMAN RIGHTS FOR THE GDR POPULATION.

6. WE QUESTION WHETHER THE WITHHOLDING OF ECONOMIC
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BENEFITS, SPECIFICALLY MFN OR CREDITS, HAS HAD AN EFFECT ON THE RESOLUTION OF HUMANITARIAN CASES OF INTEREST TO US. WE ARE MORE INCLINED TO THINK THAT THE GDR'S DESIRE TO HAVE A GOOD RECORD AT BELGRADE AND OUR PERIODIC PRODDING HAVE HAD MORE TO DO WITH THE RESOLUTION OF THESE CASES THAN THE WITHHOLDING OF THESE ECONOMIC BENEFITS. WE WOULD NOTE THAT, ALTHOUGH THE GDR DOES NOT HAVE ACCESS TO GOVERNMENTAL CREDITS, IT CONTINUES TO DO QUITE WELL WITH US AND OTHER BANKS IN TERMS OF OBTAINING COMMERCIAL CREDITS. IN OUR VIEW, WHILE WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO USE QUIET DIPLOMACY AND PRODDING WHERE POSSIBLE, WE THINK THAT PART OF THE REFTEL WHICH STATES WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO USE THESE TACTICS IN OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS AREAS NEEDS FURTHER REFINEMENT IN TERMS OF WHAT TACTICS AND IN WHAT OTHER AREAS.

7. WE DISAGREE WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSERTION THAT IN ITS HANDLING OF HUMAN RIGHTS THE GDR IS CAUGHT IN A VICE BETWEEN THE SOVIETS AND WEST GERMANS. WE DO NOT THINK THE GDR IS FORCED TO STRUCTURE ITS POLICY IN FAVOR OF THE SOVIETS; WE THINK THEY DO SO BECAUSE IT IS IN THEIR INTEREST AND BECAUSE IDEOLOGICALLY THEY ARE ALLIED IN

SUCH MATTERS. CONSEQUENTLY, WE THINK THAT PARAGRAPH HAS LITTLE BEARING ON WHETHER OR NOT THE US SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT USE AN AGGRESSIVE APPROACH TOWARDS THE GDR WITH REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS.

8. WE HAVE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE GDR IS UP TIGHT ABOUT THE POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR US/GDR RELATIONS OF AN ACTIVE HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY BY THE USG. WE THINK THEY ARE PREPARED TO LET THE RELATIVELY LIMITED STATE AND RANGE OF OUR RELATIONS DETERIORATE IN THE FACE OF A STRONG HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY RATHER THAN TO ACCEDE TO A MODIFICATION OF THEIR POLICIES AS THE PRICE OF IMPROVED RELATIONS.

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9. OUR INITIAL VIEW IS THAT WE SHOULD HAVE A COUNTRY ACTION PLAN ON HUMAN RIGHTS, WITH THE EMPHASIS FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST ON DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE AND THE PRESENTATION OF POSITIVE AND SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS IN THE INFORMATION AND CULTURAL FIELDS TO TEST THE REGIME'S WILLINGNESS TO BE MORE FORTH-COMING WITHIN THE SPIRIT OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT. POLANSKY

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